

Tip #130

Using Opaque White

In many places (and a lot of shows you may want to enter), ONLY pure, transparent watercolor is considered acceptable. But as I wrote in my very first art tip here (and many since!), gouache can be a handy, creative and satisfying addition to your painting kit. It's similar to painting with acrylics, but water-soluble.

In this tip, we're going to focus on opaque white gouache and other white options, rather than as opaque *color* – in a mixture, as an overlayer, as spatter, as highlights – set yourself free! Use it as a misty overlayer, to soften an area or suggest atmosphere. Try one of the white gel pens for sharp accents! Play with the broad white lines offered by Faber-Castell Pitt artist pens, White 101, as Donald Owen Colley does, seen at <http://butnekkiddoodles.com/>.

130-1 - Snow Starling



Just the smallest bit of opaque white spatter can suggest snow...that's what I used on this starling last winter, with his feathers all fluffed against the cold. Mix a nice thick puddle and spatter on with a stiff bristle brush (an old toothbrush will do.)

130-2 - Ellis

I used a thin wash of opaque white to just suggest the shape and color of my sweet kitty, Ellis, on tan paper. It doesn't take much to make them pop!



130-3 - Liberty Memorial

I used thinned white gouache as an overlay in the clouds, along with a white gel pen here and there for sharper, cleaner whites (and of course those white gel pens work great to add just a bit of sparkle to an animal's eye.)

130-4 - Opacity WCP

For greater portability than a set of gouache paints, for instance when all you're likely to need is a touch of white, try those Pitt pens, a Gelly Roll white, or any one of the white watercolor pencils or pens on the market. They're not as opaque as gouache, but they're very handy. You can see comparisons in this image!

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I'll be offering some of the demos from my classes at <http://www.etsy.com/shop/CathyJohnsonArt>, my catalog where you can find instructional CDs and downloads for artists at <http://www.cathyjohnson.info/catalog.html>, or drop by for a visit on Facebook, <http://www.facebook.com/cathy.johnson1>! Check out my YouTube videos, <http://www.youtube.com/user/KateJosTube>, for lots more art tutorials.

